



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Office of Higher Education

Testimony
by
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Executive Director
before the
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
1:30 p.m. – LOB Room 1E
February 14, 2013

Senator Bye, Representative Willis and distinguished members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 200 - AN ACT CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION. We appreciate your support of this legislation with the addition of the substitute language, which we understand you have copies of from LCO, and your willingness to fast-track this legislation on behalf of the students.

SB 200 allows the Office of Higher Education to issue certificates to the students who were affected by the unauthorized closings of the Butler Business School in Bridgeport and the Sawyer Schools in Hamden and Hartford. These certificates will be given to students in the following categories:

1. Students who finished both their didactic and externship portions of the program and were simply waiting for the graduation ceremony to pick up their certificates.
2. Students who have successfully completed their didactic course of study at the school and are currently in the (180 hour) externship phase of the program.
3. Students that are very close to the end of their externship (40 hours or less). The Office of Higher Education may supervise these students in order for them to complete their externship.

We have also worked closely with the accrediting agency for the school, the Accrediting Commission of Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), who revoked their accreditation on January 3, 2013, to arrange for a special accreditation period for the students who are in their externship to allow them to complete, receive their certificates and be able to sit for their programmatic exam (The National Center for Competency Testing exam). A student must be graduated from a licensed and accredited institution to be eligible to register and take the exam.

Many of these students have taken out loans for financial aid, and all of them have dedicated countless hours to their course of study. This legislation eliminates the need for some students to transfer to another school and spend more time and money for a program which they have already completed. Without this legislation, the Office of Higher Education is unable to issue certificates to these students.

In addition, this legislation allows for students who were in the process of completing his or her externship to finish through the facilitation of another school, and still attain a certificate from the Butler Business School in Bridgeport or the Sawyer Schools in Hamden and Hartford. This allows students to finish their hands-on training under the guidance of another school without asking that school to issue its own certificate and possibly charge additional tuition.

At this time I would also like to publicly thank Porter and Chester Institute, Lincoln Technical Institute, Branford Hall Career Institute, American Institute, Stone Academy, and Ridley-Lowell who participated in helping the students at our Information Session and for offering to teach-out students in their externship with no additional tuition or fees.

I have also attached testimony for three other bills on today's agenda.

We are withdrawing our testimony for House Bill 6365 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE ISSUANCE OF INITIAL TEACHER CERTIFICATES TO GRADUATES OF THE CONNECTICUT ALTERNATE ROUTE TO CERTIFICATION PROGRAM due to EPAC and the new certification proposal that will be amended through this recommendation; we will revisit this next year.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the following bills:

Senate Bill 850 - AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT AID TO PUBLIC

COLLEGE STUDENTS makes a technical change to Section 10a-164a for the Connecticut Aid to Public College Students (CAPCS) program. When the Board of Regents was created in 2011, this section was changed to replace references to the Board of Governors with the Board of Regents. This change allows the Office of Higher Education to request funding for CAPCS, which is in its budget. In addition, it allows the Office to develop and implement the allocation formula for CAPCS. The latter change is requested to eliminate any conflict of interest.

House Bill 5423 - AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO THE

HIGHER EDUCATION STATUTES In Section 4, it repeals obsolete language in Section 10a-10 of the general statutes by making the technical change to the Office of Higher Education where it currently resides after the reorganization of higher education.

House Bill 6364 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECEIPT OF QUARTERLY

REPORTS BY THE OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION changes all statutory references to the receipt of quarterly reports from the constituent units of higher education to include the Office of Higher Education as a recipient as well as the Appropriations Committee and the Office of Policy and Management. The Office of Higher Education uses this financial information in the calculation of student financial aid and in various reports, including the System Trends Report. This request clarifies and formalizes the distribution.